



Heroes on Horseback (HOH) Equine Assisted Therapy and Learning



Volunteer Handbook

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www.heroesonhorseback.org

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Welcome to Heroes on Horseback (HOH)!

Thank you for your interest in HOH and Equine Assisted Therapy. We are dedicated to enriching the physical, emotional, mental and social well-being of our clients, in an environment that is safe, nurturing, challenging and fun. Our mission statement says it all:

“Heroes on Horseback offers safe, professional and ethical equine assisted activities for individuals in the Low Country with physical, mental or emotional disabilities, without regard to race, color, creed or financial need.”

Volunteer training is an ongoing process. What you learn in our volunteer training course will start you off on the right path with the information and tools you need to be an effective and productive volunteer. Our hope is that this training will provide you with a good foundation for your association with HOH and that your time spent with us will be safe, rewarding and fun. We want you to experience those positive gains, too! Many of our volunteers tell us that they feel they are getting as much therapy as the clients, just by being here and helping.

Heroes on Horseback is grateful for our volunteers. Without you and the gift of your time, energy and skills, we would not exist to offer our services to our community. Whether you clean a stall, assist during therapy sessions, staff fundraising events or help out in the office, your service is valued. Our door is always open to you and we are never more than a phone call away to give you the support you need.

Warm regards,

Bob Lee
Executive Director

Peggi Lyn Noon
Program Director
Certified Instructor

Laura Kinsey
Equestrian Director
Certified Instructor

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Heroes on Horseback General Rules and Guidelines

Heroes on Horseback is an accredited member of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.). We follow PATH Intl rules and guidelines in all aspects of our practice and activities.

We believe that PATH Intl has developed an outstanding system of keeping equine assisted therapy sessions safe, challenging and satisfying for everyone involved. If you have a question about any of our rules and guidelines, please do not hesitate to ask a staff member for an explanation. We also have books and videos available, including the *PATH Intl Standards and Guidelines*, for you to read if so desired.

Because our horses are handled by many people, it is essential that everyone follow the same procedure for activities, including haltering a horse, grooming, saddling and leading. Whatever methods you employ at home may or may not be the same as the ones we request that you follow while volunteering at HOH. To ensure the well being of our horses **we insist on consistency** so that they do not become frustrated and/or sour.

As with everything in this handbook, if you have a question about why we ask you to do something a specific way, please ask. Remember that you are leading by example for clients and other volunteers.

We ask that you follow the rules to keep yourself and everyone around you as safe as possible. Non-compliance with general rules and guidelines such as to threaten the safety of participants, equines or other individuals, may result in your immediate dismissal from center activities, or, if more appropriate, notification by staff that you require additional training or guidance before continuing volunteer activities. At all times while acting as a volunteer for HOH, your conduct should reflect your commitment to these safety procedures, adherence to the confidentiality policy and concern for the general welfare of our clients, other volunteers and staff.

Safety procedures and emergency phone numbers are posted on the board by the emergency phone in the main hallway and on the tack room door. In case of a fire please exit on one of the three large doorways. Once you have safely left the barn, please gather in the outside riding arena located just across Grasse Lane. The lake is considered a hazard and is off limits to all participants and volunteers.

HOH Dress Code

Our dress code rules are for your safety and comfort during a session. We do not wish to restrict personal style or individuality – we just want to keep you free of injury, harm or frustrations.

Wear comfortable closed toed shoes that protect your feet and ankles. Waterproof shoes are preferred for walking outside, especially in the spring and winter. No sandals, open toed shoes or open backed clogs or slides. When riding, wear long pants to protect your legs.

Hats and sunscreen are advised during the summer. However, some of our clients may try to remove your hat without warning – be prepared. No jewelry other than small earring studs and a watch. Dangling jewelry can get caught in manes or tails, or be snatched by a client or distract them during a session. Jewelry can also distract the horses.

Do not wear clothing with offensive or suggestive messages or slogans that promote alcohol or

drug use. Some of our clients may be here to learn to cope with addictions.

Everyone on a horse MUST wear a helmet. No EXCEPTIONS!

HOH Barn Etiquette

Please park on the paved area near the entrance to the main barn. Try not to block the large roll-up doors as we may need to bring equipment or horses in or out using those doors.

Leave pocketbooks and personal items locked in your vehicle – we do not have storage space for them while you are busy with your duties.

No running, screaming or boisterous behavior.

Please leave your pets at home.

Please practice courteous behavior with staff, clients, horses and each other.

Gates to the outside turnout areas are to be kept shut and latched at all times. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Don't plan to go back and shut them later – shut them right away!!!

If you use the hose to wash or water horses, be sure to turn the water off.

The Human first aid kit is located in the volunteer office (tack room). Please alert the Director or instructor if it is needed for any reason. If someone is injured in a way that is beyond what can be cared for by the first aid kit, the instructor or Director will call for emergency medical treatment.

The horses need privacy in their stalls. Please do not reach in over the door or attempt to call them to you unless you are ready to take them out. Please do not pet horses on the muzzle or face area, as it encourages them to enter your space or nibble.

When horses are wearing a halter and lead rope or bridle, they are not allowed to graze, put their heads down to sniff the floor or rub their faces on their front legs. To allow them to do so will teach them that it is acceptable. For safety reasons, when horses are under tack or halter and lead, they are at work and must have their heads up.

HOH Volunteer Qualifications

Compassion	Organizational Skills
Reliability	People Skills
Patience	Willingness to assist wherever needed
Flexibility/Adaptability	Ability to ask questions
Comfortable around horses	Ability to follow directions
Ability to walk/run for periods of time	Must be AWARE and ALERT at all times

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES DURING RIDING AND EQUINE ACTIVITIES

To be an effective team member of Heroes on Horseback (HOH):

Please be prompt and reliable. If a volunteer is late, the lesson may be late and the client may not be able to participate in the activity. If a volunteer fails to show and a substitute volunteer is not arranged, our clients may not be able to participate in the lesson/activity due to lack of staff. Lack of staff creates a safety issue and safety comes first at HOH. Involvement in equine assisted activities is very special to our clients. Please be sure not to disappoint them.

HOH requests that volunteers be firmly committed to HOH and arrive early to help prepare the horses and the ring for lessons.

We ask that you stay about 30 minutes after the lesson to help clean up and discuss what went well and what may need to be done differently. If you cannot work, please let the class coordinator know as soon as possible so that he/she can arrange for a substitute.

HOH requests all volunteers to be positive role models for our clients, exhibiting calmness, discipline and kindness to all.






It is most important that all volunteers and staff respect the client's confidentiality. (See page 7)

When the scheduled activity begins, pay close attention to the instructor and avoid unnecessary chatter.

Instructors welcome your feedback and suggestions for working with the clients. Since you will be working closely with them, you may notice things and have ideas that would make the lesson or activity more useful and effective. However, please realize that some of the things the instructor does are designed to deal with the particular needs of the client and may differ considerably from able-bodied riding practices. As in any lesson, it is important that there be **one Instructor**, even if that instructor has several assistants. For our clients, who often have difficulty sorting out sensory input, that is especially important. Please provide the rider with as little help as possible and as much help as is necessary for the rider to follow the instructor's directions.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- I. Riders and their families have a right to privacy that gives them control over the dissemination of their medical and other sensitive information.
- II. Heroes on Horseback shall preserve the right of confidentiality for all individuals in the program.
- III. All individuals associated with Heroes on Horseback will respect the privacy of the clients and staff of Mindstream and shall strictly avoid areas designated as Mindstream program spaces. This may include certain areas in the barn and the grounds bordering the rings and paddocks, which are designated as Mindstream property. The lake is considered off limits to all HOH participants and volunteers.
- IV. The staff and volunteers of Heroes on Horseback shall keep confidential all medical, social, referral, personal and financial information regarding any participant and his or her family.
- V. All volunteers and employees who work for Heroes on Horseback shall be bound by this policy and will sign a statement agreeing to abide by these guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to:

-  Full-time staff
-  Part-time staff
-  Temporary employees
-  Volunteers
-  Members of the Board of Directors

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BASIC RULES FOR SAFETY WHEN WORKING WITH HORSES

1. Always approach a horse from the side in such a way that the horse is aware of your presence before you are too close. Talk to the horse. Even in a stall it is possible to approach from an oblique angle at the rear. Keep your hand on your horse when walking around him from the rear.
2. Pet the horse by stroking the shoulder or neck. Avoid dabbing at the nose.
3. Always walk around the horse rather than trying to duck under or skip over the lead line.
4. Use a lead shank and both hands when leading a horse. One hand should be 6-8" from the halter; the other hand should hold the gathered lead line, folded in the hand rather than coiled around the hand. Be sure that neither the lead line nor the reins are wrapped around your hand or your body. If the horse should rear, release the hand closest to the halter so that you will stay on the ground.
5. When leading a horse, walk beside the horse on the left side, not ahead or behind. If the horse hangs back on the end of the rope, step back and use the end of the lead rope in your left hand behind your body to encourage forward movement.
6. When leading the horse into a box stall or turning the horse out into the paddock, turn the horse so that he faces you and the door or gate. Almost close the door/gate, leaving enough space for you to exit but not the horse, before removing the halter or releasing the lead shank.
7. Keep lead shanks and reins off the ground.
8. When bridling the horse, keep your head clear in case he should throw his head or strike to avoid the bridle.
9. Adjust the saddle and girth carefully. Tighten the girth a hole or two at a time. Bear in mind that horses often blow up when first saddled, so always check the girth again before taking the horse to the mounting area.
10. When standing in the halt position, please keep in front and off to the left side of the horse to avoid being hurt if the horse should throw his head up.
11. DO NOT leave a horse on the cross-ties unattended.
14. A horse may remain in a stall with saddle on with a loose girth but DO NOT place bridle/reins on until the horse leaves the stall. Remember to recheck the girth when leaving the stall.
15. **ABOVE ALL, if you are unsure of what is being asked of you, PLEASE ASK.**

**ALWAYS TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS AND REPORT ANY SAFETY CONCERNS
IMMEDIATELY TO THE INSTRUCTOR**

UNDERSTANDING HORSE BEHAVIOR

Equine Senses

When developing relationships with and working with horses, **communication is key**. It is critical to provide a safe environment in a therapeutic riding setting. Beginning a process of understanding horse senses, instincts and implications is a step in predicting behaviors, managing risks and increasing positive relationships.

Smell:

The horse=s sense of smell is thought to be very acute. It allows him to recognize other horses and people. Smell also enables the horse to evaluate situations.

Implications:

- 👉 Horses should be allowed the opportunity to become familiar with new objects and their environment by smelling.
- 👉 It is recommended that treats not be carried in pockets since horses may desire to go after them.
- 👉 There should be no food in the riding arena.

Hearing:

The horse=s sense of hearing is also thought to be very acute. Horses may combine their senses of hearing and sight to become more familiar with new or alerting sounds.

Implications:

- 👉 Horses are wary when they hear something but do not see it. A Hearing and not seeing is often the cause of the fright/fight response. If the horse is acting nervous, talk to him in a quiet and calm voice for reassurance.
- 👉 Always be aware of the position of the horse=s ears. Forward ears communicate attentiveness and interest. Ears that are laid back often communicate that the horse is upset and/or showing aggression toward another horse or toward a person. Stiffly pricked ears indicate interest. Ears flicking back and forth also indicate attentiveness or interest. Drooping ears indicate relaxation, inattentiveness (easily startled), exhaustion or illness. Flattened ears indicate anger, threat or fear.
- 👉 Avoid shouting or using a loud voice. This can be frightening to a horse.

Sight:

The horse=s eyes are set on either side of the head. There is good peripheral (lateral) vision, but poor frontal vision. A horse focuses on objects by raising and lowering his head. The horse=s visual memory is very accurate. Horses are thought to see quite well in the dark, due to the large size of their eyes. There is still controversy as to whether horses see in color.

Implications:

- 👉 The horse may notice if something in the arena or on the trail is different. Allow the horse an opportunity to look at new objects from both sides (with both eyes). Before class, introduce any new props that may be unfamiliar to the horse.
- 👉 The horse has better peripheral vision; consider a slightly looser rein, enabling him to move his head when taking a look at objects.
- 👉 Although the horse has good peripheral vision, consider two blind spots: directly in front of him and directly behind him. The best way to approach a horse is obliquely, toward his shoulder. It may startle him if you approach from behind or directly in front.
- 👉 The horse may be unable to see around the area of his mouth. This is a safety consideration when hand feeding; therefore, **DO NOT HAND FEED HOH HORSES. PLEASE PUT TREATS IN A BUCKET**

Touch:

Touch is used as a communication between horses and between horses and people. Horses are sensitive to soft or rough touch with a person's hands or legs.

Implications:

- 🐾 Handlers should treat horses gently but firmly
- 🐾 Each horse has sensitive areas (e.g. the flank and belly areas). It is important to be familiar with them.
- 🐾 Watch the rider's leg position. Riders may need appropriate assistance to reduce a 'clothes pin' effect with their legs. Ask the instructor/therapist for the best handling technique.
- 🐾 Horses will often touch or paw at unfamiliar objects. For example, a horse may paw at a bridge or ground pole before crossing over it.

Taste:

Taste is closely linked with the sense of smell and helps the horse to distinguish palatable foods and other objects.

Implications:

- 🐾 Taste is closely linked with smell and touch. Therefore a horse may lick or nibble while becoming familiar with objects or people. BE CAREFUL, as this could lead to possible biting.

Sixth Sense:

Horses do have a 'sixth sense' when evaluating the disposition of those around them. Horses can be hypersensitive in detecting the moods of their handlers and riders. A good therapy horse is chosen for his sensitive response to the rider. At times a personality conflict may exist between handlers and horses. **It is important to let the instructor/therapist know if you are having a difficult time relating to or getting along with a particular horse.**

The Horse's Lifestyle:

It is a good idea to increase our appreciation and awareness of the horse's lifestyle. This will assist us in responding appropriately to the horse's reactions to various situations.

Flight as a Natural Instinct:

Horses are built for speed and would rather turn and run away from danger that face and fight it.

Implications:

- 🐾 At a sudden movement or noise, a horse may try to flee. Speak to the horse calmly. Avoid sudden movements on or off the horse.
- 🐾 A frightened horse that is being tied up or held tightly may try to escape by pulling back against the pressure. Relax your hold or untie him quickly. Usually he will relax. Be sure not to stand directly behind a horse.
- 🐾 If flight is not possible, the horse may either try to turn and kick out or face the danger and rear, especially in a tight area like a stall. Using a halter with a lead rope may help to maintain control while working around the horse in a stall.
- 🐾 If a horse appears frightened or fearful (note the position of his ears), it may be helpful to allow a more experienced horse to lead the way.
- 🐾 Most horses chosen to work in a therapeutic riding setting have less of an instinct to flee. The horse may look to you for reassurance. It is helpful for the volunteer to remain calm and talk to the horse in a soothing voice.

The Horse as a Herd Animal:

Horses like to stay together in a herd or group with one or two dominant horses and a pecking order among the rest of the herd.

Implications:

- 🐾 Be aware that a horse may not like being alone. This is a consideration when horses are leaving the arena or a horse loses sight of the others while on a trail ride.
- 🐾 Be aware that if the horse in front is trotting or cantering, the horse that is following may also attempt to trot or canter.
- 🐾 If one horse spooks at something, the surrounding horses may also be affected.
- 🐾 For safety, keep at least one horse length between horses when riding within a group to

respect the horses= space and pecking order.

ROLE OF THE INSIDE SIDEWALKER

Main Responsibility: To focus on the rider/client, listen to the instructor, relay and interpret commands to rider and other support team members as necessary.

Related Tasks:

Before the lesson:

- 👉 Arrive at the barn 30 minutes before lesson start time
- 👉 Check Lesson Plan or consult with the instructor to understand the pattern and purpose of the day=s lesson. Check the assignment board.
- 👉 Greet the rider when he/she arrives. Help the rider with a helmet if help is needed.

Please stay with the client throughout the session, until the lesson is over and the client returns to his/her family/caregiver/teacher. There is no need to hold clients hands unless they are small children.

Check rider=s equipment:

- 👉 Make sure the client=s helmet fits properly.
- 👉 If special adaptive equipment is needed for that rider, be sure it is readily available.
- 👉 With outside sidewalker, adjust stirrups to proper length--away from mounting area.
- 👉 Instructor/assistant instructor or designate will recheck stirrup length.

Mounting procedure:

- 👉 Consult with the instructor to determine the appropriate mounting procedure for the client.
- 👉 Assist the instructor from the mounting block or mounting ramp.

Lesson procedure:

- 👉 Walk or run beside the rider, providing physical support as needed.
- 👉 Be continually alert for the need for immediate help.
- 👉 Monitor the rider=s balance. Advise the outside sidewalker and the horse leader if the rider needs assistance regaining balance.
- 👉 Reinforce the instructor=s directions as needed.
- 👉 Encourage the rider with eye contact, simple gestures and instructions.
- 👉 Keep such instructions to a minimum so that the rider will not be confused as to who is teaching the lesson.
- 👉 Provide only such assistance as is necessary if the rider cannot perform the instructions on his/her own. Do as much as is necessary but as little as possible.
- 👉 Keep chatting to a minimum. Many of our riders may get overloaded or confused with too much auditory input.

- 👉 Alert the instructor/assistant instructor/class coordinator of any environmental concerns, such as weather or other conditions that might make riding hazardous.

After the lesson:

- 👉 Unless otherwise instructed, wait for the instructor to assist the rider in dismounting.
- 👉 Accompany the rider to parent/guardian or safe place.
- 👉 Help the rider remove the helmet if necessary and return it to its proper place.
- 👉 Write comments about the session in the Rider=s Folder; clearly noting the date and recording your initial and last name next to your entry.

Emergency procedure:

- 👉 Remain with rider until instructor takes over.

ROLE OF THE OUTSIDE SIDEWALKER

Main responsibility: To insure overall safety of rider during mounting and lesson.

Related Tasks:

Before the lesson

- 👉 Arrive at the barn 30 minutes prior to class session.
- 👉 Help the instructor in setting up the arena for the lesson

Equipment safety check

- 👉 Assist the inside sidewalker in adjusting stirrups to proper length.
- 👉 Assist with any adaptive equipment as needed.

Mounting procedure

- 👉 Assist in the mounting procedures from opposite the mounting block/ramp, (right side of the horse).
- 👉 Hold the saddle secure while the rider is mounting by holding the stirrup down.
- 👉 Check that the rider is sitting squarely in the saddle.

Lesson procedure

- 👉 Walk or run beside the rider, providing physical support as needed.
- 👉 Be continually alert for the need for immediate help.
- 👉 Monitor the rider=s balance, correct it with the help of the team.
- 👉 Provide only such assistance as is necessary if the client cannot perform the commands on his/her own. Provide as much help as is necessary, as little as possible.
- 👉 Riders may become confused with too much auditory input. Allow the inside sidewalker to provide most of the verbal instruction.

After the lesson

- 🐾 Aid the instructor in dismounting the rider.
- 🐾 Report observations or concerns to the inside sidewalker for entry in the Rider's File.
- 🐾 Help put the horses and equipment away.
- 🐾 Assist the barn manager with chores, such as cleaning tack, etc.

Emergency procedure

- 🐾 Summon assistance as needed or as directed by the instructor.

ROLE OF THE HORSE LEADER

Main responsibility: To focus on the horse, leading and controlling the horse before, during and after the lesson. Report any horse related problems to the instructor.

Related Tasks:

Before the lesson:

- 🐾 Arrive at the barn at least 45 minutes to one hour before the lesson to groom and tack up the horse.
- 🐾 Check the lesson plan or consult with the instructor to understand the expected routine.

Horse preparation:

- 🐾 Collect the horse (Follow Horse Retrieval/Turnout Procedures) and cross-tie the horse for grooming and tacking up (never leave a horse unattended)
- 🐾 Groom the horse.

Tack (follow tacking procedures)

- 🐾 Appropriate tack will be designated by the volunteer barn manager or instructor:
- 🐾 Saddle or adaptive equipment will be determined based on the needs of the rider.
- 🐾 Safety stirrups must be on all stirrup irons.
- 🐾 A halter goes on under the bridle, with the lead shank attached to the halter.
- 🐾 Bridle with HOH reins; unless instructed otherwise, reins are connected to the bridle

TIGHTEN GIRTH BEFORE TAKING HORSE TO MOUNTING BLOCK. The instructor or horse leader will check the girth prior to mounting, when in the ring and prior to trotting.

Mounting procedure:

- 🐾 Stand directly in front of the horse's face, holding the horse gently by both sides of the bit or halter with both hands so that the horse cannot change position. This is called the halt position.
- 🐾 Ask permission of rider and sidewalkers before walking away from the mounting block or ramp.
- 🐾 Walk straight away from the ramp, so that the inside sidewalker will not be in danger of falling off of the ramp.

Lesson procedure:

- 🐾 Hold the lead line about 6-8" from the horse's head with the extra lead folded in (not wrapped around) your free hand.
- 🐾 Stay between the horse's head and his shoulder when leading; keep a light touch on the lead unless restraint is required.
- 🐾 Use voice commands to aid in transitions from one gait to another.
- 🐾 Always keep at least two horse-lengths apart from the next horse.
- 🐾 Listen to instructor to assist your rider in moving the horse forward. Provide only such assistance as is necessary; only lead the horse forward or turn the horse if the rider cannot perform the instructions on his/her own. Some of our riders need extra time to process an instruction, so be sure to allow for that time.
- 🐾 When standing in the halt position, keep in front and off to the left side of the horse to avoid being hurt if the horse should throw his head up. Make sure that the horse is standing balanced on all four feet.

After the lesson:

- 🐾 Brush or, if weather permits, rinse off the and turn the horse out to its designated paddock or stall.
- 🐾 Rinse off the bit after every use; clean bridle/reins/girth/saddle with clean cloth/sponge
- 🐾 Replace all equipment and sweep or rinse out the wash stall
- 🐾 Place soiled pads and dirty towels in the laundry bin
- 🐾 Report observations and feedback concerning the horse to the Equestrian Director.

Emergency procedure:

- 🐾 The horse leader remains with the horse at all times **even if the client falls off.**

ROLE OF THE INSTRUCTOR

Main responsibility: To insure that the lesson is proceeding in a safe and organized manner.

Related Tasks:

Before the lesson:

- 🐾 Develop goals and objectives for each rider/client.
- 🐾 Develop a lesson plan, obtaining materials needed for the lesson.
- 🐾 Assign volunteer roles in consultation with class coordinator/assistant volunteer coordinator.
- 🐾 Determine tack necessary for each horse/rider in cooperation with barn manager.
- 🐾 Know the location of the barn equine first aid kit.
- 🐾 Set up the arena with the help of volunteers.

Lesson procedure:

- 🐾 Communicate the lesson plan to volunteers before class begins, either by posting the written plan or by holding a short meeting with volunteers before the lesson.
- 🐾 Lead the group through the class, attending to each individual rider=s needs.
- 🐾 Approve individual rider=s activities if they differ from lesson plan.

After the lesson:

- 🐾 Put away equipment in the arena with the help of volunteers and leave the arena as it was before the lesson.
- 🐾 Evaluate the lesson using input from volunteers in each Rider=s Folder.
- 🐾 Write progress notes on each individual client/rider pertinent to goals and objectives.

Emergency procedure:

- 🐾 The instructor is in charge of critical decision making and delegation of appropriate tasks in any emergency situation or safety concern.
- 🐾 The Equestrian Director is responsible for handling horse injuries and determining if a vet should be called. The instructor should immediately report any concerns to the Equestrian Director or HOH staff.

INAPPROPRIATE PERSONAL CONDUCT

At all times, while participating in HOH related activities, the instructor is responsible for providing appropriate responses to inappropriate rider and/or volunteer behavior in the riding ring. The class coordinator, school teachers/aides and/or other designated individuals are responsible for attending to the behavior of observers and others not in the ring. Riders/clients and/or volunteers who cannot be prevented from engaging in inappropriate behavior will be asked to leave. They will not be allowed to return unless such behavior is corrected.

ROLE OF GROUND LESSON/VOCATIONAL/HORSEMANSHIP INSTRUCTOR

Main responsibility: To teach the unmounted riders/clients horsemanship

Related tasks:

Before the lesson:

- 👉 Arrive at the barn 30 minutes prior to class.
- 👉 Create a lesson plan and make sure that sufficient teaching materials are available.
- 👉 Set up a clean area outside the arena in which to teach.
- 👉 Retrieve appropriate horses from paddock/stalls

Lesson procedure:

- 👉 Teach the unmounted riders about grooming, horse conformation, tack, etc., using equipment, handouts, horses, etc. Refer to the *Ground Lesson/Vocational Program Manual*

After the lesson:

- 👉 Keep unmounted riders with you until their teacher/parent/caregiver is present.
- 👉 Put away all teaching materials so that they will be available for the next class.
- 👉 Write progress notes; update appropriate forms.

Emergency procedure:

- 👉 Remain with the unmounted riders, keeping them from the horses.

ROLE OF THE CLASS COORDINATOR

Main responsibility: To serve on the Volunteer Committee; to perform the administrative and liaison duties of the session. The class coordinator's organized and helpful demeanor sets the entire atmosphere so that the instructor and other volunteers are free to concentrate their efforts on working with the riders and horses.

Related tasks:

Before the lesson:

- 🐾 Call all volunteers each week to confirm their scheduled time.
- 🐾 Arrive at the barn 45 minutes prior to class.
- 🐾 Organize the class table with:

🐾 Human first aid kit	Cell phone
🐾 Class Book and Rider's Files	Volunteer nametags
🐾 Pens, dry markers and supplies	Beverage and cups
- 🐾 Any information to be distributed to volunteers or participants
- 🐾 Put out helmets
- 🐾 Place chairs in the observation area
- 🐾 Fill in the assignment board:
- 🐾 Post on the board the list of horse/volunteer/rider teams for the session as received from instructor/assistant volunteer coordinator.

Be sure that all rider paperwork is obtained from school teacher/parent/caregiver and given to the instructor. Make a copy for the Class Book and give the original to the Executive Director.

Lesson procedure:

- 🐾 Greet volunteers, parents, teachers, visitors
- 🐾 Receive and maintain any required paper work, e.g. client and volunteer forms
- 🐾 Receive any fees or any other monies, keeping monies separated as to purpose using envelopes provided for client fees, video purchases, tee-shirt purchases, etc.
- 🐾 Maintain rider/client and volunteer attendance records (in Class Book).
- 🐾 Make sure each volunteer has a nametag.
- 🐾 Advise the instructor of any new volunteers, determine what training is needed and coordinate the appropriate training.
- 🐾 Make sure that everyone who will work in the arena either has a Volunteer Form on file or signs the Occasional Volunteer Information and Release Form.

After the lesson:

- 👉 Ensure sidewalkers enter comments in Rider's Files.
- 👉 Determine availability of volunteers for following week, informing instructor/assistant volunteer coordinator of any changes.
- 👉 Return Rider's Files to crate.
- 👉 Return equipment to storage area.
- 👉 Ensure that all volunteers return tags and complete volunteer log.
- 👉 Obtain future volunteer personal schedules and arrange substitutes as necessary.
- 👉 Call substitutes as needed.
- 👉 Advise HOH staff of needed food and clerical supplies

ROLE OF VOLUNTEER CLASS BARN MANAGER

Main responsibility: To supervise HL activities and ensure that horses are ready for each class at the appropriate time with the appropriate equipment.

Related tasks:

General:

- 🐾 Know the horses and all the tack needed for the lesson
- 🐾 Know the location of the barn equine first aid kit.

Before the lesson:

- 🐾 Arrive at site early enough to have horses ready for class (1 hour before the class is scheduled to begin).
- 🐾 Oversee getting all needed horses ready for each class.
- 🐾 Designate tack as requested by instructor.
- 🐾 Collect horses or have horse leaders do so.
- 🐾 Oversee volunteers (primarily horse leaders) in grooming and tacking up horses.

Horse check:

- 🐾 Appropriately cross-tied and not left alone
- 🐾 Groomed
- 🐾 Hooves picked
- 🐾 Girth tightened
- 🐾 Fly spray applied
- 🐾 Tacked correctly

Tack changes:

- 🐾 Have any necessary in-session tack changes ready

After the lesson:

- 🐾 Oversee untacking of horses by volunteers, including washing of hot horses.
- 🐾 Oversee returning clean tack to proper place.

Emergency procedure:

- 🐾 Notify the instructor and barn manager of any concerns

MOUNTED ACTIVITY EMERGENCY PLAN

If there is an emergency while a lesson is in session:

- 1) All horses will be halted.
Any time a horse is loose inside or outside the ring, all other horses must be halted.
- 2) All horse leaders will assume the halt position in front and off to the side of the horses.
- 3) All sidewalkers will stabilize their riders.
- 4) The instructor will supervise dismounting procedures verbally or personally.
Safety dismount:
 Instructor or horse leader may call for a dismount.
 Inside sidewalker tells rider he/she is going to dismount.
 Inside sidewalker then asks the rider and/or outside side walker to clear the rider=s feet from the stirrups.
 Inside sidewalker wraps his arms around the rider=s waist, pulls the rider from
 the
 horse and moves with the rider to a safe place.
 Horse leader makes every effort to steady the horse.
- 5) If circumstances call for the area to be evacuated, riders will be dismounted and will be evacuated first by their volunteers. The horse leaders will remove their horses to an appropriate place out of danger.
- 6) The instructor will determine if medical personnel are required and will request assistance (usually from the outside sidewalker) in contacting specific personnel while the instructor remains with the rider.
- 7) If the rider is injured, the instructor may ask all others in the ring to leave quietly, placing one person in charge.
- 8) NO ONE, not even a parent, is allowed in the arena unless summoned by the instructor.

Please note: This plan may need to be modified due to the individual circumstances of a particular situation.

SEIZURE PROCEDURE

- Horse Leaders:** Halt mount and assume the halt position.
Make every effort to hold the horse.
- Sidewalkers:** Move in to stabilize the rider.
Remove the rider=s feet from the stirrups.
Perform **Safety Dismount** of rider if instructor or horse leader calls for one. (*Petit mal* may require safety dismount; *grand mal* usually does.):
The inside sidewalker tells the rider they are going to dismount.
The inside sidewalker wraps his/her arms around the rider=s waist, and firmly pulls the rider from the horse, then moves with the rider to a safe place.
The rider is placed on the ground (preferably on towel or blanket), on his/her side. A cushion (folded towel or jacket) should be placed under the rider=s head
Loosen tight neckwear.
Do NOT place anything in the rider=s mouth.
Do not hold the rider down.
After a seizure, allow the rider to rest or sleep if necessary.

- Call 911 IF:** The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes
The person is not known to have epilepsy or another seizure disorder
The person does not return to consciousness
He or she seems to be having a slow recovery or a second seizure, or is having difficulty in breathing
The person is pregnant
The person has medical I.D.
There is any sign of injury or sickness

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In general, the on-site instructor is in charge of critical decision making and delegation of appropriate tasks in any emergency situation or safety concern. The Director or class coordinator may assist by calling 911 when necessary. The Director or class coordinator will provide all required medical history and medical treatment forms. **The Director will also insure that an incident report/occurrence report recording all details and parties involved is prepared. It is an HOH policy that all occurrences are documented.**

The instructor will give directions to volunteers and riders as to whether they need to dismount or not. She/he will also be responsible for administering first aid as necessary. If the riders are dismounted, the horses will be returned to their stalls or to a safe area as directed by the instructor. A volunteer (usually the inside sidewalker) must accompany each rider at all times. The instructor or his/her designee will direct volunteers and riders to the appropriate location.

GLOSSARY OF PHYSICAL and COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

Glossary of Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

The following are brief, non-medical descriptions of some disabilities and conditions of participants one might encounter at the HOH therapeutic riding program. This is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of a specific disability; rather, it is a general overview with an explanation of how therapeutic riding can be beneficial.

Autism

A self-centered mental state from which reality tends to be excluded.

Characteristics: Unresponsiveness to the presence of others; withdrawal from physical contact; severely delayed and disordered language; self-stimulating behaviors; unusual or special fears; insensitivity to pain; unawareness of real dangers; hyperactivity; passivity; unusual behaviors such as smelling/tasting/licking/mouthing all objects; ritualistic behaviors; developmental delay; unusual response to sounds; clumsiness; social withdrawal; resistance to change.

Benefits: Interaction in a group setting including postural and verbal stimulation focuses interest away from self and toward others and the horses.

Cerebral Palsy

Brain damage occurring before, at or shortly after birth. It is a non-progressive motor disorder.

Types and Characteristics:

Spastic - hypertonicity with hyperactive stretch reflexes, muscle imbalances and equilibrium. Increased startle reflex and other pathological reflexes.

Athetoid - extensor muscle tension, worm-like movements, abnormal posturing and slow and deliberate speech.

Ataxic - poor balance, difficulty with quick, fine movements; often described as having a "rag doll" appearance.

Benefits: Normalization of tone, stimulation of postural and balance mechanisms, muscle strengthening and perceptual motor coordination.

Associated Problems: Seizures, hearing defects, visual defects, general sensory impairment, perceptual problems, communication problems, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, learning disabilities.

Cerebral Vascular Accident -Stroke (CV A)

Hemorrhage in brain, which causes varying degrees of functional impairment.

Characteristics: Flaccid or spastic paralysis of arm and leg on same side of body. May impair mentation, speech, sight, balance, coordination and strength.

Benefits: Promotes symmetry, stimulates balance, posture, motor planning, speech and socialization.

Down Syndrome

Condition in which a person is born with an extra chromosome, resulting in mental retardation and developmental delay.

Characteristics: Broad flat face, slanted eyes. Neck and hands are often broad and short. Usually hypotonic, have hypermobile joints and tend to be short and slightly overweight. Prone to respiratory infections.

Benefits: Riding improves expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination.

Emotional Disabilities

A congenital or acquired syndrome often compounded by learning and/or physical disabilities incorporating numerous other pathologies.

Characteristics: Trouble coping with everyday life situations and interpersonal relations. Behaviors such as short attention span, avoidance, aggression, autism, paranoia or schizophrenia may be exhibited.

Benefits: Increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness and provides appropriate social outlet.

Learning Disabilities (LD)

Catch-all phrase for individuals who have problems processing, sequencing and problem solving, but who appear to have otherwise normal intelligence skills.

Characteristics: Short attention span, easily frustrated, immature.

Benefits: Effects depend upon the particular disorder. Stimulates attention span, group skills, cooperation, language skills, posture and coordination.

Mental Retardation (MD)

Lack of ability to learn and perform at normal and acceptable levels. Degree of retardation is referred to as educable, trainable, severe or profoundly retarded.

Characteristics: Developmentally delayed in all areas. Short attention span.

Benefits: Stimulates group activity skills, coordination, balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. Provides a structured learning environment.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

Progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation.

Characteristics: Most commonly occurs in the 20 to 40-year-old range. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness, visual impairment, fatigue, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity.

Benefits: Maintains and strengthens weak muscles and provides opportunities for emotional therapy.

Associated Problems: Visual impairment, emotional liability and impaired bowel and bladder function.

Scoliosis

Lateral curve of the spine with a C or S curve with rotary component.

Characteristics: Postural asymmetry. May wear scoliosis jacket or have had stabilization surgery.

Benefits: Stimulates postural symmetry, strengthens trunk muscles.

(Note: Severe scoliosis is a contraindication for therapeutic riding).

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Trauma to the spinal cord resulting in a loss of neurological function.

Characteristics: Paralysis of muscles below the level of injury -can be flaccid or spastic. Fatigue, sensory loss and pressure sores.

Benefits: Stimulates posture and balance, strengthens trunk muscles, is an option for sports participation and recreation.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Accidental injury to the head resulting in intra-cranial bleeding with death of brain cells.

Characteristics: Gross and fine motor skills deficits. Often have impaired memory, speech, balance and/or vision. May have psychological effects.

Benefits: Stimulates balance, posture, gross and fine motor skills, speech and perceptual skills.

Partial Text from Volunteer Manual for PATH Intl Centers, Rev. 10/00

Working With Special-Needs Population

Working with people who have special needs may be a new experience for some volunteers. Please take time to know your participant and direct any questions to the instructor. Physical or mental impairments may be present at birth or may be due to injury, disease or aging. Often a major barrier for people with special needs is not the disability itself but the lack of awareness and understanding from others. Above all, please be considerate and sensitive to the needs of our clients.

Wheelchair Etiquette

Many people are unsure how to act when meeting someone in a wheelchair. Please try to keep the following in mind: always ask the wheelchair user if they would like assistance before you help. Be respectful—people's wheelchairs are an extension of their body space. Don't hang or lean on them unless you have permission. Speak directly—be careful not to exclude the wheelchair user from conversations. If the conversation lasts more than a few minutes, sit or kneel to communicate at eye level with the person in the wheelchair.

Escorting an Individual with a Visual Impairment

If an individual with a visual impairment looks like he/she needs assistance, please ask first if help is needed. Remember that they may need only verbal directions/cues. If physical assistance is needed, allow the individual to hold onto your arm above the elbow and walk one-half step ahead. The individual also may have a specific way they prefer to receive assistance. Repeat or verbalize information that may be written or posted. If you're uncertain of what to do, ask your instructor how you can help.

General Guidelines for Working with Individuals with Hearing/Language Impairment

Try to maintain good eye contact, looking at the individual when speaking to him/her. Speak clearly, avoid talking slowly or over-emphasizing words and avoid long instructions or conversation. Become familiar with hand gestures and body positions that the participant may be using to represent words and concepts. See your instructor with questions. Provide assistance with communication when needed (i.e. visual cues, gestures, etc.). Alert the instructor if the participant is having difficulty with a hearing aid (i.e. ringing or whistling).

Non-Verbal or Limited Verbal Expression

Many of our participants are non-verbal or limited in their verbal expression. To enhance directions with these individuals, instructors and volunteers may reinforce requests and directions with basic

American Sign Language (ASL).

Other ways in which a volunteer can help

We are always in need of volunteers to help in other aspects of our program. Listed below are two committees where your service would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in participating in one of these committees, please contact the Executive Director or Program Manager.

Fundraising Committee: help with HOH annual fundraiser (Ride-A-Thon); assist with annual fundraising events held on our behalf, such as Celebrity Golf; help with food booth at the Annual Horse Show.

If someone approaches you regarding raising funds for HOH, please direct them to call the Executive Director at 757-5607.

Public Relations Committee: help with generation of a three-times-per-year newsletter, including administrative tasks such as data entry and labeling for bulk mail.

Speaker's Bureau

If you know of an organization that may be interested in learning more about Heroes on Horseback, members of the Board, the Executive Director and the instructors would be pleased to present the program. Please let the Executive Director or a Board member know of the organization and someone will contact the group to arrange a presentation.

Administrative Tasks

There are many non-related horse chores that are part of an equine assisted activities program, such as filing, data entry, copying, telephoning, etc. If you believe you possess organizational skills and want to "work behind the scenes" in the office, please call 757-5607.

Donations

As a non-profit organization, we will always be in need of donations to operate our program. A unique way to honor someone's birthday or anniversary or to remember someone's passing is to make a donation through our Alternate Gift Giving programs. If you are interested in making a donation through this program, please call 757-5607 and mention the Alternate Gift Giving program. Leave your name and mailing address and you will be sent information.

Another unique way to participate in helping horses is through the **Carrot Club** – sponsor a horse for a month, 6 months or a year or the **Sponsor a Rider** program. If you would be interested in either or both of these programs, please contact the Executive Director at 757-5607, leave your name and phone number and you will be contacted.

Community Service Hours

If you are a high school student or know of one who needs community service hours, volunteering for Heroes on Horseback would help generate those hours. Please call

757-5607 for further information.

**INTRODUCTION TO PATH INTL
(North American Riding for the Handicapped Association)**

PATH Intl is a membership organization that fosters “safe, professional, ethical and therapeutic equine activities through education, communication, standards and research for people with and without disabilities.”

PATH Intl promotes therapeutic riding primarily through public awareness campaigns and educational events. Above all, PATH Intl is concerned with safety and service to its members and riders. PATH Intl has developed several programs designed to benefit those concerned with therapeutic riding. Please visit the website at WWW.PATHIntl.ORG for more information

Accreditation

This program helps to ensure that PATH Intl operating centers are conducting safe and medically appropriate programs. All PATH INTL operating centers are expected to comply with mandatory and applicable standards listed in the *PATH Intl Operating Center Standards and Accreditation Manual*.